IOC R&D and SIAM have been advised to study the effect of 10% ethanol in gasoline on various type of in use vehicles.

Besides spearheading commercialization of ethanol-blended gasoline in the country, Indian Oil has been in the fore front of technology development for bio-diesel production from various edible/non-edible oils and its application in vehicles.

Studies by Indian Oil's R&D Centre have established that bio-diesel produced from Jatropha seeds was at par with bio-diesel produced from vegetable oils. In the past few years, the Indian Oil R&D Centre has studied the entire value chain of bio-diesel, starting from Jatropha plantation to field trials on passenger cars, light commercial vehicles and railway locos in collaboration with several vehicle manafucturers, Railways and State transport undertakings.

Homogenous Catalysed Single pot process has also been developed for production of bio-diesel.

India's first experimental hydrogen-CNG dispensing station was commissioned in the campus of IOC R&D at Faridabad and demonstration projects are underway on use of Hydrogen-CNG blends in heavy and light vehicles. These projects are funded by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and National Hydrogen Energy Board (NHEB) under Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) of the Government of India.

NHEB under MNRE has estimated about one million vehicles using pure hydrogen or hydrogen CNG blended fuel by 2020.

**Consequencies of price hike in petroleum product**

591. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken a decision to hike the prices of petrol, kerosene, diesel and cooking gas recently;

(b) if so, the details of the price hike;

(c) how far such a hike shall have an adverse effect on the common man; and

(d) the action expected to be taken by Government to treat this hike in price as a "Final Hike" for this decade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) The global prices of crude oil and petroleum products have remained high and volatile since 2004. In view of this, the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are incurring under-recoveries on domestic sale of sensitive petroleum products namely petrol, diesel, PDS kerosene and domestic LPG. As passing on the entire impact of the steep increase in the oil prices to the consumers would have resulted in hardship to the common man, the retail selling prices of petrol, diesel, PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG have not been increased in tandem with the international oil prices.

To meet the escalation in international oil prices, the Government has adopted the principle of 'equitable burden-sharing' between the Government, the oil PSUs and consumers to protect the interests of the common man, vulnerable sections of society and also the financial health of OMCs. In this context, the Government has made a marginal increase in petrol and diesel

prices by Rs. 2/litre and Re. 1/litre respectively with effect from 15.2.2008 which is actually in the nature of a restoration of retail prices of these products of their price level operating before February, 2007. The Government has issued Oil Bonds and Upstream Oil Companies have also contributed by offering discounts on crude oil and petroleum products to partially compensate the under-recoveries of OMCs.

Despite the steep increases in international oil prices, the Government has not increased the prices of PDS kerosene during the last six years and of Domestic LPG during the last three years.

The prices of crude oil and petroleum products in the international market fluctuates on daily basis. Government is closely monitoring the international oil prices and will continue to protect the interests of consumers.

**Risk to oil pipeline in Jharia, Jharkhand**

592. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the fire in the coal belt beneath Jharia town has become potential danger for the oil pipelines passing through that area;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) how many pipelines are passing through that area and how many pipelines face risk; and

(d) what efforts have been made by Government to save those pipelines from caving in?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Based on the information made available by the oil Public Sector Undertakings, there is no oil pipeline passing through the coal belt of Jharia.

However, Indian Oil Corporation Limited's (IOCL's) Haldia-Barauni Product Pipeline (HBPL), originating from Haldia (West Bengal) and terminating at Barauni (Bihar) passes through Raniganj (West Bengal), Rajbandh (Durgapur, West Bengal), Asansol (West Bengal), Madhupur (Jharkhand), Jasidih (Jharkhand), Jhajha (Bihar) and Mokamah (Bihar). A 42-km. section of this pipeline passes through the coal belt area of Raniganj in West Bengal and this pipeline transverse along a route about 70km. away from Jharia.

IOCL's HBPL is safe and close monitoring of coal mine fire is maintained to avoid any untoward incident. Physical patrolling of the pipeline route is done regularly and a close watch is kept for any abnormal indications. Geological Survey of India and Indian Institute of Rock Mechanics have also been approached to get further information about coal belt area through which a section of HBPL is passing. Besides these, close interaction is also being done with Eastern Coal Field Limited to obtain the latest information about these areas.

**Recommendation of GoMs**

593. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister has constituted a Group of Ministers (GoMs) to examine proposal of retail prices of petroleum products;